

Assessment of Coastal Access Proposals

on the Isle of Wight on sites and features of nature conservation concern

18th March 2020



Nature Conservation Assessment for Coastal Access Proposals around the Isle of Wight

About this document

This document should be read in conjunction with the published Reports for the Isle of Wight Stretch and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

The Coastal Access Reports contain a full description of the access proposals, including any additional mitigation measures that have been included. These Reports can be viewed here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-on-the-isle-of-wight-comment-on-proposals>

A HRA is required for European sites (SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites). The HRA is published alongside the Coastal Access Reports.

This document, the Nature Conservation Assessment (NCA), covers all other aspects (including SSSIs, MCZs and undesignated but locally important sites and features) **in so far as any HRA does not already address the issue for the sites and feature(s) in question.**

The NCA is arranged site by site. Map A show designated sites along this stretch of coast.

See Annex 1 for an index to designated sites and features for this stretch of coast.



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Introduction

This stretch begins at East Cowes ferry terminal and encompasses the entire coast of the Isle of Wight, including The Medina River. Full details of route alignment proposals can be found in the main report.

The stretch is split into the following ten lengths:

- IOW1: East Cowes ferry terminal to Wootton Bridge
- IOW2: Wootton Bridge to Culver Down
- IOW3: Culver Down to Orchard Bay
- IOW4: Orchard Bay to Chilton Chine
- IOW5: Chilton Chine to Colwell Chine
- IOW6: Colwell Chine to Hamstead Point
- IOW7: Hamstead Point to Thorness Bay
- IOW8: Thorness Bay to Gurnard Luck
- IOW9: Gurnard Luck to Cowes chain ferry
- IOW10: Cowes chain ferry to East Cowes ferry terminal

This document will assess lengths IOW2 to IOW10. A separate document will be produced to assess length IOW1 and will be published with the report for length IOW1 later in the year.

There are three Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) present around the Isle of Wight Coast:

- The Needles MCZ
- Yarmouth to Cowes MCZ
- Bembridge MCZ

These sites will not be included in this report because the associated features are subtidal and therefore we do not consider that the access proposals will impact them in any way.



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Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Ryde sands and Wootton Creek SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Brent goose (dark-bellied), <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Teal, <i>Anas crecca</i>

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Current situation

The SSSI is within the seaward coastal margin of the proposed coast path alignment.

Fishbourne, at the entrance to Wootton Creek is one of three car ferry terminals for the Isle of Wight that runs to and from Portsmouth. Adjacent this is the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, offering mooring facilities for visiting yachtsmen. The east side of the creek is privately owned by the adjacent businesses and residents of Fishbourne village, with private slipways and gardens running down the mean high water. The west side of the creek is also mostly lined by resident's properties, gardens and slipways which run to mean high water. On this side of the creek there is also an outdoor adventure centre and holiday village with log cabins on the banks of the creek. The adventure centre has private access to the creek and offers a variety of water sports activities.

To the east of Wootton creek is Quarr Abbey, home to Benedict Monks who use the woodland at Fishborne Copse for meditation and contemplation. Access to these woods is currently permitted only to the Monks and guests of Quarr Abbey. The shoreline between here and Ryde Pier is lined by houses, with gardens down to mean high water, and Ryde Golf Course. There are two public rights of way, one from Church Road and one from Ladies Walk, which run down to the shore line. However, speaking to local residents it would seem that these are not well used due to the dangerous nature of the rocky shore.



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Ryde town is a popular destination for tourism and Ryde Pier is used as the port of the foot passenger ferry, which runs to and from Portsmouth. There is access to the end of the pier via foot, car and rail. Ryde Sands beach is well used by walkers and dog walkers, the majority of dog walkers being observed on the eastern sands, near Puckpool Park and Appley Park. Kite surfers occasionally use the water and horse riders have been observed using the beach at low tide. Access points to the east sands are more numerous and convenient. The west sands have limited and inconspicuous access and the beach is covered at high tide up to the sea wall.

Dogs are excluded from the public beach at Ryde between 1st May and 30th September. The dog exclusion zone extends 100m from the sea wall and covers the area east from the harbour to Appley Tower.¹ Horse riders are permitted to use the beach, although beach riding is discouraged during the summer between 10am and 6pm.

Bird Aware Solent commissioned Walk Unlimited to prepare an access management assessment of Ryde Sands, which details a proposal to implement a zoning system over Ryde sands. This system would exclude dogs from sensitive areas of the beach but encourage dog walkers to use a dog friendly, less sensitive beach area². This information has been submitted to Ryde Town Council and the Isle of Wight Council who are considering the recommendations outlined.

The condition of the SSSI between Woodside and Binstead Hard is predominantly unfavourable – recovering. Three of the units are recorded as unfavourable – no change. The main reasons for unfavourable condition is due to the habitats being affected by coastal squeeze or water pollution from agriculture and run off. Quarr Abbey Lagoon is currently recorded as favourable condition with no negative indicators.

Ryde sands seafront is recorded as unfavourable – recovering with a high condition threat risk. This is due to the unit being heavily used for recreation and the presence of the hovercraft port in the western corner. Ryde east sands and Nettlestone Point are also affected by recreational disturbance but are recorded as unfavourable – no change and favourable respectively, both with a medium condition threat risk.

Seagrove Bay is recorded as unfavourable – recovering with a medium condition threat risk due to the habitat being adversely affected by the construction of the esplanade and coastal squeeze.

¹ Isle of Wight Council. 2010. The Dog Exclusions (Isle of Wight) Amendment Order 2010.
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/azservices/documents/2053-DOG-ORDER-AMENDED-2010-final.pdf>

² Walk Unlimited. 2018. Access Management Assessment – Ryde Sands.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Wintering birds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bar-tailed godwit • Curlew • Grey plover • Redshank • Sanderling 	Wotton Creek. Ryde sands. Seaview Duver.	Sensitive to disturbance between October and March.	Any future dog exclusion orders on Ryde Sands will override new coastal access rights. Existing way marking will be updated to help walkers follow the proposed route.	No significant effect on these features.
W8 Fraxinus excelsior - Acer campestre - Mercurialis perennis woodland	Fishbourne Copse. East of Quarr Abbey Lagoon.	Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or increased access to these habitat areas.	The proposed route follows the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path along Quarr Lane and Quarr Road. Although the 2 units within which this feature is present are within seaward coastal margin, they will be excluded from access, for land management reasons, under section 24 of the CRoW Act.	No significant effect on these features.
SM1 Zostera communities saltmarsh	Ryde West Sands. Ryde Sands Seafront.	Intertidal seagrass beds would be sensitive to surface abrasion by human trampling.	The proposed route for the Coast Path is aligned along Ryde Esplanade and avoids sensitive areas.	No significant effect on these features.
Vascular plant assemblage	Fishbourne Copse (unit 8). Seaview Duver (unit 15).	Could be sensitive to trampling or enrichment where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	This feature is present in units 8 and 15 of the SSSI. Unit 15 is landward of the trail alignment and therefore won't be affected by our access proposals. Unit 8 will be excluded from access, for land management reasons, under section 24 of the CRoW Act.	No significant effect on these features.
Population of Schedule 8 stonewort - Lamprothamnium	Seaview Duver.	Could be sensitive to trampling or enrichment where the	Seaview Duver is landward of the proposed trail alignment and is not	No significant effect on these features.

papulosum, Foxtail Stonewort		coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	included in the coastal margin. Dogs are excluded from this area.	
Coastal lagoons	Quarr Abbey Lagoon. Seaview Duver.	This feature could be sensitive to dogs entering the lagoons where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	Quarr Abbey Lagoon is within the seaward coastal margin of the proposed trail alignment, however it will be excluded from access, for land management reasons, under section 24 of the CRoW Act. Seaview Duver is landward of the proposed trail alignment and is not included in the coastal margin. Dogs are excluded from this area.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

No, we do not propose any establishment works within this SSSI.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Briddlesford Copses SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes – Briddlesford Copses SAC

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Ryde sands and Wootton Creek SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Maternity colonies of bats - Bechstein's bat, Myotis Bechsteinii

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Current situation

Briddlesford Copses SSSI is landward of the proposed route of the England Coast Path by approximately 0.5km.

The condition of the units within this SSSI are predominantly favourable with no condition threat risk. 4 of the units are recorded as in unfavourable-recovering condition. 4 of the units are recorded as unfavourable-declining due to a decline in the quality of saltmarsh communities as a result of reduced saline influence.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible Impacts		
Woodland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W10 - Quercus robur - Pteridium aquilinum - Rubus fruticosus woodland • W15 - Fagus sylvatica - Deschampsia flexuosa woodland • W16 - Quercus spp.- Betula spp.- Deschampsia flexuosa woodland • W7 - Alnus glutinosa - Fraxinus excelsior - Lysimachia nemorum woodland • W8 - Fraxinus excelsior - Acer campestre - Mercurialis perennis woodland 	Briddlesford Copses and surrounding woodland.	Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or increased access to these habitat areas.	The proposed route follows the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path across Wootton Bridge, seaward of Briddlesford Copses SSSI, and none of the units will fall within the proposed coastal margin.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

No, we do not propose any establishment works within this SSSI.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Priory Woods SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site? No

Current situation

The existing public footpath between Seagrove Bay and Duver car park at St Helen’s passes through Priory Woods. It is used by local walkers and dog walkers and also by visitors staying at the Priory Bay Hotel and Nodes Point Holiday Centre.

The path through the woods is often muddy and some new infrastructure is proposed to make it easier to use, including short sections of boardwalk.

The condition of the two units within this SSSI are currently favourable with no condition threat risk.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible Impacts		
FB - Quaternary of South Central England	Priory Woods.	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access. Infrastructure works, where they obstruct the geological feature, would have an impact.	Proposed infrastructure works within this SSSI are not considered as likely to obstruct the geological feature due to their location.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, details below:

- Replacement of 2 lengths of boardwalk at 10 meters each
- Extension of 2 existing boardwalks by 2 meters each
- Replacement of timber steps with retaining steps 10 meters in length
- New timber retaining steps 11 meters in length
- New handrail 3 meters long

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.



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Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Brading Marshes to St Helen's Ledges SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - Southampton and Solent Water SPA, Solent and Southampton water Ramsar, Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Brading Marshes to St Helen's Ledges SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Brent goose (dark-bellied), <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Teal, <i>Anas crecca</i>
Coastal lagoons

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

In addition to the area also covered by European sites, Brading Marshes to St Helen's Ledges SSSI includes areas of cliff at Priory Woods, St Helen's Common and St Helen's Duver.

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through this SSSI in some areas and it also falls within the seaward coastal margin.

There is a public right of way within this SSSI along the beach at Priory Bay, which is well used by walkers and dog walkers. The beach is also used by The Priory Bay Hotel guests. The public right of way ends at St Helen's Duver car park where walkers can continue along the promenade or take a public bridleway, also the Isle of Wight Coast Path, through the centre of The Duver. Site visits have shown that there are many walked paths over The Duver as well as the existing bridleway, and a circular walk is promoted by the National Trust. At the end of the Duver there are several boat yards, the harbour office and a small café.

Bembridge Harbour is popular with visiting yachtsmen with many events taking place over the summer months. Bembridge Sailing Club and Brading Haven Yacht Club both offer their facilities to visitors.

Brading Marshes is an RSPB nature reserve with a permissive path south of Embankment Road which takes walkers along the old railway track, through Bembridge Lagoons. The permissive path is used by walkers and dog walkers and walking trails are advertised on the RSPB website.

Units 1-17 of this SSSI either cover an area where the coast path route is proposed to be aligned, or fall within the seaward coastal margin of the coast path route. The condition of these units is predominantly unfavourable – no change. At Priory Bay and St Helen’s ledges and within Bembridge Harbour, this condition is due to water pollution.

St Helen’s Duver Foreshore is recorded as unfavourable-declining conditions as it is considered be effected by coastal squeeze, due to the presence of coastal defences. Landward of this is St Helen’s Duver East, which although in favourable condition, has a medium condition threat risk due the recreational disturbance as there are a high level of dog walkers using the beach and risk of enrichment by waste.

Bembridge Point and Bembridge Point Sandflats are recorded as unfavourable – declining and unfavourable – no change respectively. There is a medium condition threat risk due to inappropriate scrub control and lack of appropriate habitat management works. During the 2015 assessment there was also evidence of vehicle encroachment onto Bembridge Point Sandflats, possibly to extract material.

All other units in this area are recorded as favourable condition.

Risk analysis

Feature (or group of features)			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Breeding birds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemblages of breeding birds - Lowland damp grasslands • Assemblages of breeding birds - Lowland open waters and their margins 	Brading Marshes Nature Reserve.	Would be sensitive to disturbance which causes nesting pairs to either leave the nest or act to protect it from the perceived threat. Reduced time which the birds are incubating their eggs, feeding any young or being aware of predators.	The proposed trail is aligned along Embankment road, seaward of Brading Marshes and the marshes will not be included in coastal margin.	No significant effect on these features.
Wintering birds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant • Curlew • Dunlin • Gadwall 	Brading Marshes Nature Reserve.	Sensitive to disturbance between October and March.	The proposed trail is aligned along Embankment road, seaward of Brading Marshes	No significant effect on these features.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grey plover • Little grebe • Redshank • Shelduck • Shoveler • Wigeon 	Bembridge Harbour		<p>and the marshes will not be included in coastal margin.</p> <p>Sensitive areas within the intertidal at Bembridge Harbour comprise of areas of soft mud which are unsuitable for walking over and no new coastal access rights will be created over them.</p> <p>Some additional way marking will be installed and existing way marking updated to help walkers follow the proposed route.</p> <p>We propose to install an interpretation panel to inform walkers of the species present and how to act around them.</p>	
<p>Fen/Marsh/Swamp:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M22 <i>Juncus subnodulosus</i> - <i>Cirsium palustre</i> fen meadow • M23 <i>Juncus effusus/acutiflorus</i> - <i>Galium palustre</i> rush pasture • Vascular plant assemblage 	Brading Marshes Nature Reserve.	Could be sensitive to trampling and enrichment from dog waste where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	The proposed trail is aligned along Embankment road, seaward of Brading Marshes and the marshes will not be included in coastal margin.	No significant effects on these features.
<p>Lowland neutral grassland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG10 <i>Holcus lanatus</i> – <i>Juncus effusus</i> rush pasture • MG11 <i>Festuca rubra</i> - <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> - <i>Potentilla anserina</i> grassland • MG5 <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> – <i>Centaurea nigra</i> grassland 	Brading Marshes Nature Reserve.	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	The proposed trail is aligned along Embankment road, seaward of Brading Marshes and the marshes will not be included in coastal margin.	No significant effects on these features.
<p>Lowland heath & acid grassland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U1 b,c,d,f <i>Festuca ovina</i> - <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> - <i>Rumex acetosella</i> grassland 	Brading Marshes Nature Reserve.	Could be sensitive to trampling by where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	The proposed trail is aligned along Embankment road, seaward of Brading Marshes and the marshes will not be included in coastal margin.	No significant effects on these features.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U2 <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> grassland 				
<p>W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland</p>	Brading Marshes Nature Reserve.	Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or increased access to these habitat areas.	The proposed trail is aligned along Embankment road, seaward of Brading Marshes and the marshes will not be included in coastal margin.	No significant effects on these features.
<p>Vegetated shingle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SD1 <i>Rumex crispus</i> - <i>Glaucium flavum</i> shingle community SD2 <i>Honkenya peploides</i> - <i>Cakile maritima</i> strandline community 	St Helen's Duver.	Plants growing in shingle banks could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	<p>There is already a high level of access on St Helen's Duver by walkers and dogs.</p> <p>The proposed trail is aligned along the seawall and on existing narrow footpaths, avoiding areas of vegetated shingle.</p> <p>We propose to install an interpretation at Ferry Point to inform walkers of the importance these habitats and request that they stay on the path.</p>	No significant effect on these features.
<p>Sand dunes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SD12 <i>Carex arenaria</i> - <i>Festuca ovina</i> - <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> dune grassland SD4 <i>Elymus farctus</i> ssp. <i>Boreali-atlanticus</i> foredune community 	St Helen's Duver.	Plants growing in sand dunes could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	<p>There is already a high level of access on St Helen's Duver by walkers and dogs.</p> <p>At St Helen's Duver the proposed trail is aligned along the seawall and along the edge of the dune habitat using existing narrow footpaths.</p> <p>At Bembridge Harbour the trail is aligned seaward of the main dune habitat.</p> <p>We propose to install an interpretation panel at Ferry Point to inform walkers of the importance of these habitats and request they stay on the marked route.</p>	No significant effect on these features.

			The England Coast Path will be maintained to National Trail quality standards and the condition of the path surface, infrastructure and signage regularly checked to ensure the route is easy to follow and use.	
<p>Saltmarsh:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SM14 Atriplex portulacoides saltmarsh • SM16a Festuca rubra saltmarsh Puccinellia maritima sub-community • SM18 Juncus maritimus saltmarsh • SM24 Elytrigia atherica saltmarsh • Invert. assemblage W53 Saltmarsh, Estuary & Mudflat 	Old Mill Ponds, Bembridge Harbour.	Would be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	<p>The proposed route of the trail follows existing paths and avoids areas of saltmarsh.</p> <p>The area where this feature group is present is landward of the proposed trail alignment and does not fall within coastal margin.</p>	No significant effect on these features.
Sheltered muddy shores (including estuarine muds)	Bembridge Harbour.	The intertidal mud habitat feature is not sensitive to being walked on occasionally and have a high resilience to abrasion and disturbance.	<p>The proposed route of the trail follows existing paths and avoids areas of mudflat.</p> <p>Areas of soft mud are unsuitable for walking over and no new coastal access rights will be created over them.</p>	No significant effect on these features
Sheltered rocky shores (predominately sheltered to very sheltered from wave action)	St Helen's Ledges.	Rocky shore habitats are not sensitive to being walked on occasionally and have a high resilience to abrasion and disturbance.	<p>The proposed trail is aligned up the steps and into Priory Woods, avoiding St Helen's Ledges.</p> <p>Although it is possible to walk over St Helen's ledges at low tide, the nature of the rocks makes it difficult to access.</p>	No significant effect on these features.
<p>Geological:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC – Paleoentomology • FM – Palaeoentomology 	St Helen's Ledges.	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most	There is no risk of impact to the rock ledges from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.



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	St Helen's Duver.	levels of recreational access.		
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Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, details below:

- Interpretation panel at Ferry Point, St Helen's Duver
- Simple wooden waymark post directing walkers from St Helen's Duver across the causeway
- Middle bridge on the cause way will be raised to decrease step height and handrails replaced

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Whitecliff Bay and Bembridge Ledges SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar, South Wight Maritime SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Whitecliff Bay & Bembridge Ledges SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Moderately exposed rocky shores
Reefs

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through this SSSI around Bembridge Foreland and it also falls within the seaward coastal margin.

The beach at Bembridge is well used by walkers and dog walkers and there is a public right of way all the way along this stretch of beach. The ledges are also used for rock pooling and by anglers. The Bembridge Coast Hotel is situated landward of Bembridge ledges and there is access from the hotel grounds to the beach.

From Foreland fields to Culver Down, there is a public right of way on the cliff top, which is also the Isle of Wight Coast Path. Access to Whitecliff Bay is possible at low tide, however it is more difficult due to the rocky nature of the shore at Black Rock.

This SSSI is predominantly recorded as favourable condition with no condition threat risk. The only exception is Foreland fields which is recorded as unfavourable – no change due to the presence of beach huts and associated defences at the foot of the cliff reducing natural erosion processes.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impact(s)		
SM1 Zostera communities saltmarsh	Tyne Ledge to Black Rock ledge in tidal pools.	Intertidal seagrass beds are sensitive to surface abrasion by human trampling.	We propose to align the trail on the upper section of the shore around Bembridge and include maps at either end of the low tide route to ensure walkers stay on the proposed route.	No significant effect on these features.
MC11 Festuca rubra - Daucus carota ssp. gummifer maritime grassland	Cliff face from Culver Down to Bembridge.	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	The proposed route of the trail is aligned on existing paths and avoids sensitive areas. Although in some places this habitat will fall within the coastal margin, it would be difficult and unsafe for walkers to access due to the steep, slumping nature of the cliff face.	No significant effect on these features.
Geological: • EC – Paleogene • EC - Tertiary Mammalia • EC - Tertiary Paleobotany	Throughout SSSI.	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.	There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.

Moderately exposed sandy shores (with polychaetes and bivalves)	Bembridge Ledges and Black Rock Ledge.	This habitat feature is generally found on the mid and low shore and remains water-saturated at all tides. It is not sensitive to being walked on occasionally. Burrowing polychaetes and bivalves are not sensitive the surface abrasion to the sand flats by trampling.	There is no risk of impact to the sandy shores from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.
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Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

No, we are not proposing any establishment works that fall within this SSSI.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Bembridge School and Cliffs SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site? No

Current situation

The SSSI covers the Bembridge Boarding School campus fields and playing field which are used for sports activities by the school. The proposed coast path is aligned through the seaward extent of the SSSI here. It also covers the cliff face between Black Rock Ledge and Bembridge Foreland, however due to the nature of this cliff face it is unlikely to be accessed.

Bembridge School playing fields and Steyne House/Howgate Cliff are both recorded as favourable condition with no condition threat risk.

The Foreland fields unit is recorded as favourable condition, but with a medium condition threat risk due to bramble, ivy and scrubby vegetation covering areas of the cliff face and therefore cause the geological feature to be obscured. This may be due to coastal processes being prevented due to coastal defences.

The remaining three units are recorded as unfavourable – no change due to inappropriate scrub control and therefore the geological feature being obstructed.

Risk analysis

Feature (or group of features)			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Geological: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC - Quaternary of South Central England • FB - Quaternary of South Central England • IS - Quaternary of South Central England 	Bembridge School playing fields. Cliff face between Black Rock Ledge and Bembridge Ledge.	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.	There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

No, there are no establishment works proposed within this SSSI

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Bembridge Down SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - South Wight Maritime SAC

There are no notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site in this case.

In addition to the areas also covered by the European site, Bembridge Down SSSI also includes the grassland from Culver Down to Red Cliff.

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through this SSSI on Culver Down and it also falls within the seaward coastal margin.

Culver Down is an area of CRoW open access land and well used by walkers and dog walkers with routes promoted by the National Trust. There is a small car park and pub nearby, and the Yarborough Monument, old battery and bunkers attract visitors. There are public rights of way over the downs, eventually running along the cliff edge until Yaverland Road car park. The Isle of Wight Coast Path is also aligned over Culver Down and along the cliff edge.

All units in this SSSI are recorded as favourable condition with no condition threat risk. Culver Down is noted as being a high access area, but with trampling limited to narrow footpaths and so favourable condition is maintained.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Calcareous grassland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CG2 Festuca ovina - Avenula pratensis lowland calcareous grassland • Vascular plant assemblage 	Culver Down. Grassland between Culver Down and Yaverland.	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	Area is CRoW open access land, owned and managed by the National Trust. The site is a popular visitor destination and is traversed by a number of established paths. The proposed route for the Coast Path follows existing paths around the cliff edge. The path surface is in good condition and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat. Some additional way marking will be installed to help walkers keep to the proposed route. The England Coast Path will be maintained to National Trail quality standards and the condition of the path surface, infrastructure and signage regularly checked to ensure the route is easy to follow and use.	No significant effect on these features.
Maritime cliff and slopes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC11 Festuca rubra - Daucus carota ssp. 	Culver Cliff. Red Cliff.	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or	The proposed route of the trail is aligned on existing footpaths on the cliff top, and avoids sensitive areas.	No significant effect on

gummifer maritime grassland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MC4 Brassica oleracea maritime cliff-ledge community MC8 Festuca rubra - Armeria maritima maritime grassland 		improved access to these habitat areas.	Although in some places this habitat will fall within the coastal margin, it would be difficult and unsafe for walkers to access due to the steep, slumping nature of the cliff face.	these features.
Geological: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EC – Aptian EC - Cenomanian-Maastrichtian EC - Jurassic - Cretaceous Reptilia EC - Post-Variscan Structures EC - Wealden 	Culver Cliff and Red Cliff. Whitecliff ledges. Redcliff foreshore.	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.	There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, details below:

- 2 new multi finger posts on Culver Down

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Bonchurch Landslips SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - South Wight Maritime SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Bonchurch Landslips SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Soft maritime cliff and slope

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through this SSSI.

The site is currently well used by walkers and dog walkers and has a public right of way and the Isle of Wight Coast Path running through it. There is a small car park on Leeson Road, and several public rights of way link this road with the landslip. There is also a car park on Shore Road from which it is only a short walk to Monk's Bay beach along the promenade.

The condition of this SSSI is predominantly favourable with no identified condition threat risk. Two units are recorded as unfavourable – recovering condition due to rocks that support rare species of bryophyte being covered in ivy.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Woodland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W8 Fraxinus excelsior - Acer campestre - Mercurialis perennis woodland • Lichen assemblage • Bryophyte assemblage 	Bonchurch landslip. Woods near Smugglers Haven car park. Bordwood Cliff. Open ground throughout slip.	Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or increased access to these habitat areas.	Bordwood Cliff is within the seaward coastal margin of the proposed trail alignment, however it is inaccessible by foot as it is too steep and impenetrable. Lichen and Bryophyte assemblages are present on boulders throughout the landslip and would not be affected by the footpath. Through the landslip and woods the proposed route of the trail will be aligned along the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path. Where the route gets particularly muddy and wet we propose to improve the conditions with aggregate. This will help to keep walkers on the path and ensure that	No significant effect on these features.



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			it is able to withstand additional use without affecting adjacent habitat.	
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Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, see details below:

- Upgrading path surfacing through landslip for 620 meters
- Replacement of concrete steps 10 meters in length

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Compton Chine to Steephill Cove SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - South Wight Maritime SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Compton Chine to Steephill Cove SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Moderately exposed rocky shores

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Current situation

The proposed England coast path is aligned through this SSSI and it also falls within the seaward coastal margin.

Areas of grassland from Compton Chine to Brook Chine and some of St Catherine's point are designated as CRoW open access land. There are public rights of way and the Isle of Wight Coast path aligned along the cliff top from Freshwater Bay to Blackgang Chine. There are several car parks and view point car parks along

this stretch at Freshwater Bay, Compton Down, Shippard’s Chine, Brook Chine, the Isle of Wight Pearl, Whale Chine and Blackgang and many camping and holiday sites. The Dinosaur Farm Museum is located at Lower Sutton Farm, offering fossil hunting excursions along this stretch of coast on the eroding cliffs. Other recreational activities include paragliding and surfing.

Down to St Catherine’s Point and around St Catherine’s Lighthouse there are public rights of way and other well walked routes promoted by the National Trust. From here to Steephill Cove there are public rights of way on the cliff top above the Undercliff and on the cliff top on the open coast, and several rights of way which link these two creating the opportunity for circular walks.

This SSSI is predominantly in unfavourable – recovering condition with 28 out of the 38 units being recorded as such by Natural England. The remaining 10 units are recorded as favourable condition.

Five of the units within this SSSI have a high condition threat risk due to declining populations of breeding Glanville Fritillary. It is thought that scrub encroachment and lack of grazing is probable part cause for the decline, as well as sea level rise and rapid cliff erosion. The Isle of Wight Soft Cliffs and Chines Conservation Project is being implemented and could remedy this.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Calcareous grassland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CG1 Festuca ovina - Carlina vulgaris lowland calcareous grassland • CG2 Festuca ovina - Avenula pratensis lowland calcareous grassland • CG3 Bromus erectus lowland calcareous grassland • CG4 Brachypodium pinnatum lowland calcareous grassland • CG5 Bromus erectus - Brachypodium pinnatum lowland calcareous grassland • Population of RDB liverwort - Cephaloziella 	St Catherine’s Point. Strip of slumping undercliff at St Lawrence (Unit 18).	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas. Invertebrate assemblages could be sensitive to loss of habitat through trampling.	Unit 18 is landward of the proposed trail alignment and does not fall within coastal margin. Part of St Catherine’s Point is already CRoW open access land, owned and managed by the National Trust. There is a high level of access with routes promoted by the National Trust. However, the slumping nature of this area means there are limited routes for safe walking. Some updated way marking will help walkers to follow the proposed route. The England Coast Path will be maintained to National Trail quality	No significant effect on these features.

<p>baumgartneri, Chalk Threadwort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population of Schedule 8 liverwort - <i>Southbya nigrella</i>, Blackwort • Population of Schedule 8 moss - <i>Acaulon triquetrum</i>, Triangular Pygmy-moss • Population of Schedule 8 plant - <i>Melampyrum arvense</i>, Field Cow-wheat • Invert. assemblage F112 open short sward 			<p>standards and the condition of the path surface, infrastructure and signage regularly checked to ensure the route is easy to follow and use.</p>	
<p>Maritime cliffs & slopes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC11 <i>Festuca rubra</i> - <i>Daucus carota</i> ssp. <i>gummifer</i> maritime grassland • MC5 <i>Armeria maritima</i> - <i>Cerastium diffusum</i> ssp. <i>diffusum</i> maritime therophyte community • MC8 <i>Festuca rubra</i> - <i>Armeria maritima</i> maritime grassland • MC9 <i>Festuca rubra</i> - <i>Holcus lanatus</i> maritime grassland • Vascular plant assemblage • Invert. assemblage F111 bare sand & chalk • Invert. assemblage F113 exposed sea cliff • Invert. assemblage W124 soft rock seepage 	<p>Cliff face and Cliff top from Compton to Steephill Cove.</p>	<p>Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.</p> <p>Invertebrate assemblages could be sensitive to loss of habitat through trampling.</p>	<p>At Cripple’s Path we propose to upgrade the existing well used trail with steps to encourage walkers to remain on the marked route. It would be difficult and unsafe for walkers to deviate from the existing public right of way.</p> <p>Although in some places this habitat will fall within the coastal margin, it would be difficult and unsafe for walkers to access due to the steep, slumping nature of the cliff face.</p>	<p>No significant effect on these features.</p>
<p>Geological:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC – Aptian • EC - Jurassic - Cretaceous Reptilia • EC - Mesozoic Palaeobotany • EC – Wealden • IA - Coastal Geomorphology 	<p>Foreshore between Compton Chine and St Catherine’s Point.</p>	<p>Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.</p>	<p>There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals.</p>	<p>No significant effect on these features.</p>

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes – See details below:

- Replacement of stile with kissing gates at Compton Chine
- New timber retaining steps near Compton Chine for length of 5 meters
- Replacement of 2 stiles with kissing gates between Brookgreen and Sud Moor
- 3 New simple way markers between Chilton Chine and Grange Chine
- 2 new multi-finger posts between Chilton Chine and Grange Chine
- Replacement of footbridge at Isle of Wight Pearl with length of 5 meters
- Move 295 meters of fence inland west of Grange Chine
- Replacement of timber steps at Grange Farm for length of 5 meters
- Replacement of retaining steps east of Grange Chine for length of 46 meters
- New footbridge bridge, 5 meters in length, east of Cliff Lane track
- Replacement of footbridge, 5 meters in length, east if Cliff Lane track
- 2 new multi finger post at Shepherd's Chine
- New interpretation panel at Shepherd's Chine
- Replacement of retaining steps at Shepherd's Chine for length of 43 meters
- Upgrading of verge at Whale Chine to surfaced pavement with hand rail
- New multi finger post in field adjacent Old Blackgang Road
- Creation of 2 gaps in the hedgerow of the field adjacent Old Blackgang Road as access points
- New fence in field adjacent Old Blackgang Road for length of 145 meters
- New retaining steps from Blackgang overflow car park to roundabout for length of 10 meters
- New retaining steps from Blackgang overflow car park to PRoW for length of 7 meters
- New multi finger post in Blackgang overflow car park
- New multi finger post in field west of Blackgang viewpoint car park
- Replacement of steps from Sandrock Road for length of 176 meters
- New kissing gate on Sandrock Road
- Replacement of stile with kissing gate at St Catherine's Point
- New retaining steps and handrail on Cripple's Path for length of 50 meters
- New bridge at Binnel Point, 7 meters in length
- New retaining steps at undercliff of Binnel Point totalling a length of 100 meters
- 5 new way markers at undercliff of Binnel Point

Much of the works above are along the existing right of way network and are located in areas not identified as sensitive. Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to



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us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Compton Down SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site? Yes (Isle of Wight Downs SAC, South Wight Maritime SAC).

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Compton Down SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Population of Schedule 8 plant - <i>Gentianella anglica</i> , Early Gentian

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through this SSSI at Compton Bay.

Compton Down is an area of CRoW open access land. The Tennyson Trail traverses the top of the downland ridge and has good links with the current Isle of Wight Coast Path and other public rights of way. This offers numerous walks which are advertised by the National Trust with good views over West Wight.

The beach between Brook Bay and Compton Bay is thought to be the best place to look for dinosaur remains on the Isle of Wight and is popular with fossil hunters. It is also one of the best places for surfing and water sports.

The SSSI is predominantly in favourable condition, with 9 of the 13 units being recorded as such by Natural England. The remaining 4 units are recorded as in unfavourable – recovering condition. This is due to high cover of scrub and gorse on the steep slopes, which makes management more difficult for Tapnell and East Afton Downs. At Compton Down West and Afton Down the condition is due to the presence of the golf course and therefore lack of appropriate management, including cutting or grazing of rough scrub. Units recorded as unfavourable are landward of the proposed trail alignment.

Risk analysis

Risk		Conclusions
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Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts	Considerations and mitigation measures	
<p>Calcareous grassland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CG1 Festuca ovina - Carlina vulgaris lowland calcareous grassland • CG2 Festuca ovina - Avenula pratensis lowland calcareous grassland • Vascular plant assemblage • Invert. assemblage F112 open short sward 	Cliff top between Afton and Compton (Unit 7).	<p>Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas. Invertebrate assemblages could be sensitive to loss of habitat through trampling.</p>	<p>Area is already CRoW open access land, owned and managed by the National Trust, and is a popular visitor destination. The proposed route for the Coast Path follows the existing public right of way and Isle of Wight Coast Path. The path surface is in good condition and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat.</p> <p>Some updated way marking will help walkers follow the proposed route.</p> <p>The England Coast Path will be maintained to National Trail quality standards and the condition of the path surface, infrastructure and signage regularly checked to ensure the route is easy to follow and use.</p> <p>All other units with this habitat present are landward of the proposed trail alignment and do not fall within the coastal margin.</p>	No significant effect on these features.
<p>Maritime cliff and slopes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC1 Crithmum maritimum - Spargularia rupicola maritime rock-crevice community • MC11 Festuca rubra - Daucus carota ssp. gummifer maritime grassland • MC4 Brassica oleracea maritime cliff-ledge community • Invert. assemblage F111 bare sand & chalk 	<p>Freshwater Cliff and cliff top.</p> <p>Afton to Compton Foreshore.</p>	<p>Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.</p> <p>Invertebrate assemblages could be sensitive to loss of habitat through trampling.</p>	<p>The proposed trail is aligned on the cliff top of freshwater cliff. The area is already CRoW Open Access land, owned and managed by the National Trust, and is a popular visitor destination. The proposed route for the Coast Path follows the existing public right of way and Isle of Wight Coast Path. The path surface is in good condition and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat.</p>	No significant effect on these features.

			The cliff face where this habitat is present will fall within the coastal margin, however it would be difficult and unsafe for walkers to access due to the steep, slumping nature of the cliff face.	
EC - Cenomanian-Maastrichtian	Freshwater Cliff Afton Foreshore	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.	There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

No, we are not proposing any establishment works within this SSSI

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Headon Warren and West High Down SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - South Wight Maritime SAC, Isle of Wight Downs SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Headon Warren & West High Down SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Population of Schedule 8 plant - <i>Gentianella anglica</i> , Early Gentian
Soft maritime cliff and slope

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

In addition to the areas also covered by the European sites, Headon Warren and West High Down SSSI also includes the cliff face in front of The Needles Heritage Attraction and Headon Warren.

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through this SSSI and it also falls within the seaward coastal margin.

Areas of Tennyson Down, West High Down and Headon Warren are designated as CRoW open access land. There are many public rights of way, the Tennyson trail and Isle of Wight Coast Path crossing Tennyson and West High Down, which take walkers past Tennyson’s Monument. Dogs on leads are welcome in this area. The Needles and The Old Needles Battery are a popular tourist destination as well and The Needles Heritage Attraction offers facilities such as toilets, café and parking.

Headon Warren is also popular with walkers, with public rights of way crossing Headon Hill and a circular route advertised by the National Trust. The National Trust advertise that dogs are welcome but to be kept on leads around wildlife and livestock.³

The SSSI is predominantly favourable in condition with 24 out of 26 units recorded as such by Natural England. One unit is recorded as partially destroyed due planning permission being given for a pitch and putt course which has resulted in the loss of the interest feature.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
MG5 Cynosurus cristatus – Centaurea nigra grassland	Tennyson Down and West High Down.	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	Most of the area is already CRoW Open Access land owned and managed by the National Trust, and is a popular visitor destination. The proposed route for the Coast Path follows the existing walked routes and Isle of Wight Coast Path. The path surface is in good condition and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat. Some additional way marking will be installed and existing way marking updated to help walkers follow the proposed route.	No significant effect on these features.
Maritime cliff & slopes: • MC1 Crithmum maritimum - Spargularia	Cliff face from Headon Warren to Highdown Cliffs.	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	The proposed route of the trail is aligned along existing walked routes and the Isle of Wight Coast Path and avoids sensitive areas.	No significant effect on these features.

³ <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-needles-headland-and-tennyson-down/trails/points-of-view-headon-warren-walk>

<p>rupicola maritime rock-crevice community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MC11 Festuca rubra - Daucus carota ssp. gummifer maritime grassland MC4 Brassica oleracea maritime cliff-ledge community MC8 Festuca rubra - Armeria maritima maritime grassland 			<p>Although this habitat will fall within the coastal margin, it would be difficult and unsafe for walkers to access due to the steep, slumping nature of the cliff face.</p>	
<p>Lowland heath & acid grassland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> U1 b,c,d,f Festuca ovina - Agrostis capillaris - Rumex acetosella grassland H2 Calluna vulgaris – Ulex minor 	<p>Headon Hill.</p>	<p>Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.</p>	<p>Most of the area is already CROW Open Access land owned and managed by the National Trust, and is a popular visitor destination. The proposed route for the Coast Path follows the existing walked routes and Isle of Wight Coast Path. The path surface is in good condition and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat.</p> <p>Some additional way marking will be installed and existing way marking updated to help walkers follow the proposed route.</p>	<p>No significant effect on these features.</p>
<p>Calcareous grassland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CG1 Festuca ovina - Carlina vulgaris lowland calcareous grassland CG2 Festuca ovina - Avenula pratensis lowland calcareous grassland CG3 Bromus erectus lowland 	<p>Tennyson Down. West High Down. Needles headland.</p>	<p>Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.</p>	<p>Most of the area is already CROW Open Access land owned and managed by the National Trust, and is a popular visitor destination. The proposed route for the Coast Path follows the existing walked routes and Isle of Wight Coast Path. The path surface is in good condition and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat</p> <p>Some additional way marking will be installed and existing way marking</p>	<p>No significant effect on these features.</p>

calcareous grassland • Lichen assemblage • Vascular plant assemblage			updated to help walkers follow the proposed route. Lichen communities are present close to the cliff edge and therefore unlikely to be subject to trampling.	
Geological: • EC – Paleogene • EC - Tertiary Mammalia • EC - Tertiary Paleobotany • EC - Tertiary Reptilia	Headon Warren to Alum Bay cliffs and foreshore. Needles headland to East Tennyson cliffs.	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.	There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, see details below:

- New simple waymark post at Tennyson Monument
- New multi finger post at Headon Warren

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Colwell Bay SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site? No

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through this SSSI at Colwell Bay beach.

The beach is a popular destination for tourists and families as it is easily accessible with a large car park with toilet facilities and several cafes. The beach is also used by visitors and owners at the Linstone Chine Holiday Park.

The SSSI is predominantly in unfavourable – declining condition, with 5 of the 9 units recorded as such by Natural England. This is because the presence of groynes and hard defences along the foreshore which are interfering with coastal processes and causing parts of the cliff to become vegetated. In addition, Linstone Chine has been damaged due to unconsented dumping of concrete rubble and the flow of water has been diverted away from the chine which are both interfering with coastal processes and obscuring geological features.

The 2 units covering areas of foreshore and 1 unit at Brambles Chine are recorded as favourable condition.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Geological: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC – Paleoentomology • EC - Paleogene 	Foreshore and cliff from Linstone Chine to Warden Point.	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.	There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals. Units that are in unfavourable – declining condition are difficult to access due to the nature of the steep and slumping cliff face.	No significant effect on these featuresb.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, see details below:

- Replacement of timber steps over 2 groins

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Yar Estuary SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes – Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Yar Estuary SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Aggregations of non-breeding birds – Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds – Brent goose (dark-bellied), <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds – Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds – Teal, <i>Anas crecca</i>
Sheltered muddy shores (including estuarine muds)
Coastal lagoons

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Current situation

Units 1-7 of the SSSI fall within the seaward coastal margin of the proposed coast path alignment.

Norton Spit has a linear public right of way on a gravel track leading to the sand dunes where there is a picnic bench and information panels. Evidence of BBQs has been seen on site visits to the area, although the condition assessment notes that there is evidence of management to control this.

Units 1-7 are predominantly unfavourable – recovering in condition with 5 of the units recorded as such by Natural England due to water pollution. One unit is recorded as being unfavourable – recovering as although condition of the habitat is general good, trampling and rabbit activity have resulted in a significant level of bare ground.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Wintering birds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant • Curlew • Dunlin • Gadwall • Grey plover • Lapwing 	Norton Marsh. Marsh and mudflats bordering Yar Estuary.	Sensitive to disturbance between October and March.	The marsh and mudflats bordering Yar Estuary are landward of the proposed trail alignment and do not fall within the coastal margin. Areas of soft mud and marsh at Norton Marsh are unsuitable for	No significant effect on these features

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little grebe • Redshank • Shelduck • Shoveler • Wigeon 			<p>walking over and no new coastal access rights will be created over them.</p> <p>There is an existing interpretation panel on Norton Spit, informing walkers of the species present and their importance.</p>	
<p>Saltmarsh:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SM10 Transitional low marsh vegetation with <i>Puccinellia maritima</i>, annual <i>Salicornia</i> species and <i>Suaeda maritima</i> • SM11 <i>Aster tripolium</i> var. <i>discooides</i> saltmarsh • SM28 <i>Elytrigia repens</i> saltmarsh • SM6 <i>Spartina anglica</i> saltmarsh • Vascular plant assemblage • Invert. Assemblage W53 Saltmarsh, Estuary & Mudflat 	Norton Marsh.	Would be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	<p>The proposed route of the trail follows the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path and avoids areas of saltmarsh.</p> <p>Areas of intertidal marsh are unsuitable for walking over and no new coastal access rights will be created over them.</p>	No significant effect on these features.
S4 <i>Phragmites australis</i> swamp and reed-beds	Within marsh areas and fringing the Estuary.	Could be sensitive to trampling and enrichment from dog waste where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	This feature group is landward of the proposed trail alignment and does not fall within the coastal margin.	No significant effect on these features.
<p>Sand dunes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SD19 <i>Phleum arenarium</i> – <i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i> dune annual community • SD2 <i>Honkenya peploides</i> – <i>Cakile maritima</i> strandline community • SD4 <i>Elymus farctus</i> ssp. <i>Boreali-atlanticus</i> foredune community • SD6 <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> mobile dune community 	Norton Spit.	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	<p>The proposed route of the trail follows the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path and avoids areas of dune habitat.</p> <p>There is an interpretation panel on the end of Norton Spit informing people of the habitat and species present. We propose to add in a new interpretation panel at the entrance to Norton Spit to advise users of the importance of dune habitats and</p>	No significant effect on these features.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SD8 Festuca rubra – Galium verum fixed dune grassland 			<p>asking them to keep to the proposed route.</p> <p>There is some level of management currently: fencing off marram grass on rotation, infilling blow-holes to encourage re-generation.</p>
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Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, see details below:

- New interpretation at the entrance to Norton Spit

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Bouldnor and Hamstead Cliffs SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes – Solent Maritime SAC.

There are no notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site in this case.

In addition to the area covered by the European site, Bouldnor and Hamstead Cliffs SSSI also extends from mean high water to the top of the cliffs.

Current situation

The Isle of Wight Coast Path currently passes through Bouldnor Wood and along the cliff top. There are sections of this route that are difficult to maintain and it is frequently muddy and impassable due to the slumping cliff and clay substrate.

The proposed route for the Coast Path is aligned along the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path throughout most of Bouldnor Wood, but departs from this to follow the gorse field on its landward side at Fort Bouldnor. This is to avoid areas of slumping cliff where the current Isle of Wight Coast Path has been re-directed and areas that become particularly muddy and wet.

The SSSI falls within the seaward coastal margin of the proposed coastal path alignment.

The SSSI is predominantly favourable in condition with 8 of the 9 units being recorded as such by Natural England.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Woodland: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W8 Fraxinus excelsior – Acer campestre – Mercurialis perennis woodland • W10 Quercus robur – Pteridium aquilinum – Rubus fruticosus woodland 	Bouldnor and Hamstead cliffs	Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or increased access to these habitat areas.	The proposed route of the trail mostly follows the existing public right of way and Isle of Wight Coast Path outside of the SSSI. Where the cliff has slumped the proposed route of the trail is aligned further inland, away from the SSSI. Away from the path, the area is difficult and unsafe to access due to the nature of the slumping cliffs and the presence of blue slipper clay.	No significant effect on these features
Soft maritime cliff and slope	Bouldnor and Hamstead cliffs	Cliffs generally have good resistance to most levels of recreational access. Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to this habitat.	The proposed route of the trail follows the existing public right of way and Isle of Wight Coast Path and avoids the sensitive area. Although the habitat falls within the seaward coastal margin it is difficult and unsafe to access due to the nature of the slumping cliffs and the presence of blue slipper clay.	No significant effect on these features
Geological: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC - Tertiary Mammalia • EC - Tertiary Paleobotany • EC - Tertiary Reptilia • EC – Paleontomology • EC – Paleogene • EC – Aves 	Bouldnor and Hamstead cliffs and foreshore.	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.	There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

No, we are not proposing any establishment works within this SSSI

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Newtown Harbour SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Newtown Harbour SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Aggregations of breeding birds - Common tern, <i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Aggregations of breeding birds - Little tern, <i>Sterna albifrons</i>
Aggregations of breeding birds - Sandwich tern, <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Brent goose (dark-bellied), <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>
Assemblage of internationally important waterfowl species
Coastal lagoons

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

In addition to those areas covered by the European sites, Newtown Harbour SSSI also includes: areas of field and woodland around Creek Farm, Lower Hamstead Plantation, Woodslade Copse, Corf Camp, Old Town Hall, Fleetlands Copse, Walter’s Copse, Jersey Camp and Locks Copse.

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through this SSSI and it also falls within the seaward coastal margin.

Newtown Harbour has a high level of use by boats, yachts, kayaks and paddle boarders. The Harbour has 15 mooring buoys in Newtown River and 5 in Clamerkin Lake which are managed by the National Trust. There has been evidence of BBQ sites on Hamstead Dover shingle spit. These are thought to be mainly from boat users, although it is noted that the number of sites has declined after the erection of interpretation panels.

It is possible to walk around the harbour via a series of interlinking public rights of way, permissive National Trust routes and the Isle of Wight Coast Path, although these do not always fall within SSSI units. There are also 3 hides along Clamerkin Lake, 2 of which are served by public rights of way and one by a permissive route. The only formal car parking available is at a small car park in Newtown Village, close to the Old Town Hall. The National Trust permissive routes through Shalfleet fields and Clamerkin farm exclude dogs from access.

Units to the east of the harbour are largely covered by the Ministry of Defence firing range and so access to this area is excluded under byelaw.

The SSSI is predominantly favourable in condition with 43 of the 80 units being recorded as such by Natural England. Of these units, there are 3 with a medium condition threat risk due to coastal squeeze and one due to a need for land management changes.

8 of the units are in unfavourable – recovering condition, due to a lack of positive indicator species or lack of appropriate scrub control.

26 of the units are in unfavourable – no change condition due to water pollution from agriculture/runoff. Of these, 5 have a medium condition threat risk due to recreational disturbance. In addition, there is 1 unit with a medium condition threat risk and 1 unit with a high condition threat risk, both due to diffuse water pollution.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Aggregations of breeding birds - Black-headed gull, <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	The Scrape.	Sensitive to disturbance between April and July.	<p>The black headed gull nesting area is included in the seaward coastal margin. Access to it is over areas of soft mud which are unsuitable for walking over and no new coastal access rights will be created over them.</p> <p>The proposed trail alignment is partly screened from the nesting area by hedges. There is a 2 storey hide which gives views out over the nesting area. This is often manned by volunteers of the Wildlife Trust</p>	No significant effect on these features.

			<p>who provide educational materials and advice.</p> <p>We propose to enhance the existing natural screening with willow screening panels to prevent disturbance to breeding and nesting Black-headed gull.</p>	
<p>Maritime cliffs and slopes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC8 Festuca rubra - Armeria maritima maritime grassland • MC9 Festuca rubra - Holcus lanatus maritime grassland 	Elmsworth Cliff.	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or increased access to these habitat areas.	Although this habitat is within the seaward coastal margin it is excluded from access under military byelaw.	No significant effect on these features.
MG5 Cynosurus cristatus – Centaurea nigra grassland	<p>Hart’s Farm Meadows (Unit 35).</p> <p>Newtown Bridge west field (Unit 38)</p> <p>Newtown High Street Meadows (Unit 39).</p> <p>Newtown Quay Lane fields (Units 44 & 78).</p> <p>Marsh Farm Meadow (Unit 45).</p> <p>Newtown Rifle Range (Unit 56).</p> <p>Lambleaze Rifle Butt (Unit 61).</p> <p>Ningwood Lake Meadow (Unit 79).</p>	Could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or increased access to these habitat areas.	<p>Units 56 and 61 are included in the seaward coastal margin, however they are excluded from access under military byelaw.</p> <p>Units 35, 39, 44 and 79 are landward of the proposed trail alignment and does not fall within the coastal margin.</p> <p>Units 45 & 78 are within the seaward coastal margin, however they are separated from walkers by a fence and hedgerow.</p> <p>We are proposing to align the trail through unit 38 following the existing public right of way. We do not propose to install any new infrastructure within this unit. The path surface is in good condition and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat.</p>	No significant effect on these features.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> W8 Fraxinus excelsior - Acer campestre - Mercurialis perennis woodland Invert. Assemblage F21 grassland & scrub matrix 	<p>Hamstead Dover (Units 5&6).</p> <p>Creek Farm Copse (Unit 15).</p> <p>Ningwood Lake Copse (Unit 20).</p> <p>Nunney's Wood East (Unit 21).</p> <p>Woodslade Coppice (Unit 22).</p> <p>Corf Scout Camp (Unit 28).</p> <p>Hart's Farm Meadows (Unit 35).</p> <p>Walter's Copse (Units 48 & 49).</p> <p>London Heath Copse (Units 51 & 52).</p> <p>Windgate Copse (Unit 53).</p> <p>Clamerkin Copse (Unit 54).</p> <p>Locks Green Copse (Unit 55).</p> <p>Locks Copse (Unit 58).</p> <p>Hummet Wood (Unit 70).</p> <p>Fleetland's Copse (Units 36 & 81).</p>	<p>Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or increased access to this habitat areas.</p> <p>Invertebrate assemblages could be sensitive to habitat loss through trampling.</p>	<p>Units 55, 58 and 70 will be excluded from access under military byelaw.</p> <p>Unit 28 will be excluded from access, for land management reasons, under Section 24 of the CRow Act.</p> <p>Units 5, 20, 35, 36, 51, 52, 53 and 81 are all landward of the proposed trail alignment and do not fall within the coastal margin.</p> <p>Units 6, 22 and 54 fall within the seaward coastal margin but are fenced or difficult to access.</p> <p>Unit 48 is also in the seaward coastal margin and is adjacent an existing public right of way. Some additional way marking will be installed to help walkers follow to proposed route.</p> <p>The proposed trail is aligned through units 15 and 49 on existing vehicle tracks and rides and through unit 21 on an existing public right of way. Some additional way marking will be installed to help walkers follow to proposed route.</p>	<p>No significant effect on these features.</p>
<p>Saltmarsh:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SM10 Transitional low marsh vegetation with Puccinellia maritima, annual Salicornia species and Suaeda maritima 	<p>Intertidal areas of Newtown Harbour.</p>	<p>Would be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access</p>	<p>At Hamstead the proposed trail will cross this habitat following an existing public right of way and the Isle of Wight Coast Path. We propose to replace the boardwalks here to make them safer and more</p>	<p>No significant effect on these features.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SM13a Puccinellia maritima saltmarsh, Puccinellia maritima dominant sub-community • SM14 Atriplex portulacoides saltmarsh • SM7 Sarcocornia perennis • SM8 Annual Salicornia saltmarsh • SM9 Suaeda maritima saltmarsh • Vascular plant assemblage • Invert. Assemblage M311 saltmarsh & transitional brackish marsh 		<p>to these habitat areas.</p>	<p>desirable to walk on to prevent people from trampling the saltmarsh habitat. The boardwalks will have narrow gaps to encourage dogs to remain on them.</p> <p>Areas where slender hare's ear is present will not be boardwalk and left open to allow it to continue to grow.</p> <p>We will ensure that construction works are carried out in a manner that is sensitive to the saltmarsh habitat. The footprint of the new boardwalks will reflect that of the boardwalks being replaced.</p> <p>Existing way marking will be updated to help walkers follow the proposed route.</p> <p>The England Coast Path will be maintained to National Trail quality standards and the condition of the path surface, infrastructure and signage regularly checked to ensure the route is easy to follow and use.</p> <p>Although the remainder of the intertidal where this habitat is present falls within the coastal margin, it comprises of areas of marsh which are unsuitable for walking over, and no new coastal access rights will be created over them.</p>	
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Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, details below:

- Replacement of retaining steps at Hamstead Dover for length of 10 meters
- Replacement of 2 stiles with kissing gates in field near Hamstead Dover



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- Replacement of raised boardwalk south of Hamstead Dover, 65 meters in length
- Replacement of boardwalk in Hamstead Quay for length of 95 meters
- New boardwalk in Hamstead Quay for length of 201 meters
- New multi finger post in Creek Farm field
- 3 new multi finger posts in Creek Farm Meadows
- New steps adjacent Creek Farm Meadows
- New multi finger post within woodland west of Creek Farm Meadows
- New interpretation panel near Upper Hamstead Plantation
- New footbridge south of Upper Hamstead Plantation for length of 10 meters
- New culvert in field south of Salt Works, length of 30m
- Surface works to infill holes in footpath around Salt Works
- 4 new multi finger posts in Walter's Copse
- New sleeper bridge at Walter's copse for length of 6 meters

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Thorness Bay SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Thorness Bay SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Brent goose (dark-bellied), <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Teal, <i>Anas crecca</i>
Moderately exposed sandy shores (with polychaetes and bivalves)

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

In addition to areas covered by the European sites, Thorness Bay SSSI also includes the cliffs between Thorness Bay to Burnt Wood and to the North-East of Thorness Bay.

Current situation

The proposed coast path is aligned through some parts of this SSSI and it also falls within the seaward coastal margin.

Thorness Bay beach is a mixture of sand and shingle and is well used by tourists visiting the Thorness Bay Holiday Park. The Bay is popular for water sports activities and wind surfing has been seen taking place during most site visits. The Isle of Wight Coast Path is aligned through the holiday park and along the foreshore at Thorness Bay. There are also several rights of way that link from the Rolls Hill road to the beach.

8 out of the 14 units of this SSSI are recorded as favourable condition. The remaining 6 units are recorded as unfavourable –declining condition. This is predominantly because the populations of wintering Curlew, Dunlin and Grey Plover are below minimum thresholds. The Thorness Bay Holiday Camp Marsh unit is in unfavourable condition due to a lack of habitat management and therefore significant loss of fen/reedbed habitat to willow scrub invasion.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible risks		
Wintering birds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curlew • Dunlin • Grey plover • Shelduck • Shoveler • Turnstone • Wigeon 	Saltmead Ledge. Thorness Bay to Gurnard Ledge. Thorness Holiday Camp Marsh. Thorness Marsh. Whippance Beach.	Sensitive to disturbance between October and March.	Saltmead Ledge is approximately 1km away from the proposed trail alignment and difficult to access due to the tides and slumping nature of the cliff. From Thorness Bay to Gurnard Ledge, sensitive areas within the intertidal comprise of areas of soft mud which are unsuitable for walking over and no new coastal access rights will be created over them. Thorness Holiday Camp Marsh is naturally screened and partly fenced from the proposed trail alignment. We propose that the construction of the bridge over the corner of the Thorness Holiday Camp Marsh should be completed outside of the wintering period for birds	No significant effect on these features.

			<p>and in a manner that is sensitive to bird species present.</p> <p>Thorness Marsh and Whippance Beach is landward of the proposed route alignment.</p> <p>We propose to install interpretation panels and each end of the beach to inform walkers of the species present and asking them to keep to the proposed route.</p>	
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland	Thorness Cliffs.	Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path creates or improves access to these habitat area.	This habitat falls within the seaward coastal margin. However, it is difficult and unsafe to access due to the slumping nature of the cliffs.	No significant effect on these features.
<p>Fen/Marsh/Swamp:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S21 <i>Scirpus maritimus</i> swamp • S25 <i>Phragmites australis</i> - <i>Eupatorium cannabinum</i> tall-herb fen • S4 <i>Phragmites australis</i> swamp and reed-beds 	<p>Thorness Holiday Camp Marsh.</p> <p>Thorness Marsh.</p>	Could be sensitive to trampling and enrichment from dog waste where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	<p>At Thorness Marsh this feature is landward of the proposed trail alignment and is not included in the coastal margin.</p> <p>At Thorness Holiday Camp Marsh the area is naturally screened and partly fenced from the proposed trail alignment.</p> <p>This habitat is undesirable and unsafe to access as a result of being inundated or saturated regularly. We propose to install interpretation panels at both ends of the beach to inform walkers of the habitat sensitivities and ask them to keep to the proposed route.</p> <p>We will propose that construction of the bridge at the corner of Thorness Holiday Camp Marsh is carried out in manner sensitive to reed bed and marsh habitat.</p>	No significant impact on these features.
<p>Saltmarsh:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SM13a <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> saltmarsh, 	Thorness Marsh.	Would be sensitive to trampling	The proposed route of the trail is aligned along the existing public right of way and	No significant effect on

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<p><i>Puccinellia maritima</i> dominant sub-community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SM14 <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i> saltmarsh • SM16b <i>Festuca rubra</i> saltmarsh <i>Juncus gerardii</i> sub-community • SM24 <i>Elytrigia atherica</i> saltmarsh • SM8 Annual <i>Salicornia</i> saltmarsh 	Whippance Beach.	where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	<p>Isle of Wight Coast Path and avoids areas of saltmarsh.</p> <p>We propose to install interpretation panels at each end of the beach to inform walkers of the habitat sensitivities and asking them to keep to the proposed route.</p>	these features.
<p>Vegetated Shingle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SD1 <i>Rumex crispus</i> - <i>Glaucium flavum</i> shingle community • SD2 <i>Honkenya peploides</i> - <i>Cakile maritima</i> strandline community • SD3 <i>Matricaria maritima</i> - <i>Galium aparine</i> strandline community 	Thorness Bay to Gurnard Ledge beach.	Plants growing in shingle banks could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.	<p>We proposed to align the trail to follow the existing public right of way and Isle of Wight Coast Path through this habitat</p> <p>We proposed to include an interpretation panel at both ends of the beach to inform walkers of the habitats and species present, and asking them to keep to the proposed route.</p>	No significant effect on these features.
<p>Geological:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC – Paleontomology • EC – Paleogene • EC - Tertiary Paleobotany 	<p>Saltmead Ledge & Cliffs.</p> <p>Gurnard Ledge & Cliff.</p>	Cliffs and associated geological features have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.	There is no risk of impact to the geological features from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.
Soft maritime cliff and slope	<p>Elmsworth & Thorness Cliffs.</p> <p>Gurnard Cliff</p>	<p>Cliffs have good resistance to most levels of recreational access.</p> <p>Cliff associated flora could</p>	This habitat falls within the seaward coastal margin of the proposed trail alignment. However, it is difficult and unsafe to access due to the steep and slumping nature of the cliffs.	No significant effect on these features.

		be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitats.		
Moderately exposed rocky shores	Saltmead Ledge. Thorness Bay to Gurnard Ledge.	Rocky shore habitats are not sensitive to being walked on occasionally and have a high resilience to abrasion and disturbance.	There is no risk of impact to rocky shores from the proposals.	No significant effect on these features.

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, see details below:

- 2 new interpretation panels, one at each end of Thorness beach
- Replacement of bridge on Thorness beach for length of 13 meters
- New Kissing gate at Little Thorness Farm field
- Replacement of stile with kissing gate at north-east end of Thorness beach

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Medina Estuary SSSI

Is this site also part of a European site?

Yes - Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC.

Note that notified features of the SSSI that are also qualifying features of the European site(s) are omitted from this assessment. These are:

Notified features for Medina Estuary SSSI that are also qualifying features of European sites
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Black-tailed godwit, <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Brent goose (dark-bellied), <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Aggregations of non-breeding birds - Teal, <i>Anas crecca</i>
Sheltered muddy shores (including estuarine muds)

Assessment of possible impacts on qualifying features of the European site are made in the accompanying Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Current situation

The SSSI falls within the seaward coastal margin of the proposed coast path alignment. The proposed coast path will also align through parts of units 5, 7, 10, 11 and 12.

The estuary is important for the transport of bulk cargo, including wind turbine parts from the Vestas factory. It is well used for boating activities with facilities in Newport Harbour and Island Harbour near Whippingham. The Medina Valley Centre offers outdoor and environmental education for young people with activities such as sailing, kayaking and canoeing. There are a series of popular interlinking public rights of way around the Medina and the Medina Cycleway on the western bank.

The SSSI mostly covers areas of mudflat and saltmarsh and is predominantly in unfavourable – no change condition, with 9 of the 12 units being recorded as such by Natural England. This is due mainly to water pollution and also due to recreational disturbance in some places. The remaining 3 units are in favourable condition.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Wintering Birds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant • Curlew • Dunlin • Gadwall • Grey plover • Little grebe 	Throughout Medina foreshore. Dodnor Creek/Werrar Marshes LNR.	Sensitive to disturbance between October and March.	We have generally proposed to align the trail away from high tide roosts and wholly on well used trails and public rights of way.	No significant impact on these features.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redshank • Shelduck • Shoveler • Wigeon 	<p>Pinkmead Marsh.</p>		<p>Sensitive areas within the intertidal comprise of areas of soft mud which are unsuitable for walking over and no new coastal access rights will be created over them.</p> <p>We propose to install interpretation panels at Dodnor causeway and Medina Riverside Park informing walkers of the species present and environmental sensitivities.</p> <p>There is an existing interpretation panel in the fields north of Island Harbour Marina informing walkers of the bird species present, we propose to replace this panel with updated information.</p>	
<p>Saltmarsh:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SM10 Transitional low marsh vegetation with <i>Puccinellia maritima</i>, annual <i>Salicornia</i> species and <i>Suaeda maritima</i> • SM13a <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> saltmarsh, <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> dominant sub-community • SM14 <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i> saltmarsh • SM16a <i>Festuca rubra</i> saltmarsh <i>Puccinellia maritima</i> sub-community • SM24 <i>Elytrigia atherica</i> saltmarsh • SM26 <i>Inula crithmoides</i> stands • SM28 <i>Elytrigia repens</i> saltmarsh • SM6 <i>Spartina anglica</i> saltmarsh 	<p>Medham foreshore.</p> <p>Kingstone foreshore.</p> <p>Pinkmead marsh.</p> <p>Folly Inn to Island Harbour foreshore.</p> <p>Foreshore north of Vestas.</p> <p>Dodnor creek and marsh.</p>	<p>Would be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.</p>	<p>The proposed route of the trail is aligned along existing public rights of way and avoids areas of saltmarsh.</p> <p>Although this habitat may be within the seaward coastal margin, it comprises of areas of marsh which are unsuitable for walking over, and no new coastal access rights will be created over them.</p>	<p>No significant impact on these features.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SM9 Suaeda maritima saltmarsh Vascular plant assemblage 				
<p>Woodland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> W5 Alnus glutinosa - Carex paniculata woodland W8 Fraxinus excelsior - Acer campestre - Mercurialis perennis woodland 	<p>Dickson's Copse & Dodnor Creek.</p> <p>Fairlee School Copse.</p>	<p>Ground associated flora could be sensitive to trampling where the coast path created or improved access to these habitat areas.</p>	<p>Dickson's Copse and the woodland at Dodnor Creek is landward of the proposed trail alignment and is not included in the coastal margin.</p> <p>The proposed route of the trail is aligned through the outskirts of Fairlee School Copse on an existing public right of way. This is along an existing gravel footpath that is well maintained and able to withstand some additional use without affecting adjacent habitat.</p>	<p>No significant effect on these features.</p>

Establishment works

Is SSSI assent needed to implement any specific proposals for establishment works?

Yes, see details below:

- New interpretation panel at Dodnor Causeway
- New boardwalk south of Medina Valley Centre for length of 15 meters
- New boardwalk east of Newport Business Park for length of 35 meters
- Replacement of footbridge east of Newport Business Park at 5 meters length
- New boardwalk east of Newport Business Park for length of 25 meters
- Replacement of timber steps east of Newport Business Park for length of 5 meters
- New boardwalk east of Newport Business Park for length of 10 meters

Where necessary, the Isle of Wight Council will instigate the SSSI assent process by writing to us to confirm the timing of works and how operations to be undertaken. Natural England will provide further advice as necessary.



Nature Conservation Assessment for Coastal Access Proposals around the Isle of Wight

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

White tailed sea eagle

Is this site or feature also part of a European site? No

Current situation

The Forestry Commission have been granted licences for the reintroduction of white tailed sea eagles on the Isle of Wight. If an exact location is required please contact Natural England directly. The birds will be at the site from late June 2019 for 3-4 weeks before being released. Further releases are planned in subsequent years up to 2023/2024. The breeding season for white tailed eagles is between 1st February and 31st August and a 250 meter standoff from the release site for any forestry management or recreational activity is advised to avoid disturbance.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
White tailed sea eagle	If an exact location is required please contact Natural England directly.	Sensitive to disturbance during breeding season (1 st February – 31 st August) from recreational activities occurring within 250m of nest sites.	We propose to align the route landward of the release sites with walkers fenced off from the area. Walkers will be screened from the area by planted scrub and fencing. In addition access to the release site and surrounding area will be excluded from new access rights.	No significant effect on this feature.

Establishment works

New and replacement fencing required on eastern edge of white tailed eagle release site field to prevent access to the release site. This will separate and screen walkers from the release site. Signage will also be in place and access is to be excluded on the coastal margin under Section 26(3)(a) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), all year-round.

Establishment works will be carried out in liaison with the Forestry Commission and outside of release or breeding times.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Red squirrel

Is this site or feature also part of a European site? No

Current situation

Red Squirrels are a priority species in the UK and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 due to their near threatened status. This is predominantly because of the introduction of non-native grey squirrels but also because of habitat destruction and fragmentation. They are now limited to areas mainly in Scotland and Ireland and a few places in the UK including the Isle of Wight.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Red squirrel	Present across much of the Isle of Wight’s woodlands, with important coastal woodland sites including Osborne, around King’s Quay, Quarr Abbey, Shanklin Chine, Bouldnor and Newtown.	Could be sensitive if the coast path proposals resulted in loss of habitat.	Red squirrels nest and are mainly active high up in the tree canopy, reducing the likelihood of interaction with trail users. We do not propose to remove any trees from woodland and so will not cause destruction to red squirrel habitat.	No significant effect on this feature.

Assessment of coastal access proposals on:

Glanville Fritillary

Is this site or feature also part of a European site? No

Current situation

The Glanville fritillary is almost completely restricted to coastal landslip on the Southern half of the Isle of Wight where its main food plant, narrow-leaved plantain, grows. It is a priority species in the UK and protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

The cliff tops on the south-west coast of the Isle of Wight are already accessible by means of a public right of way and the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path. The area from Freshwater Bay to Brook Chine is also CROW open access land.

Risk analysis

Risk			Considerations and mitigation measures	Conclusions
Feature/feature group	Key areas	Possible impacts		
Glanville Fritillary	Cliffs from Compton to St Catherine's Point.	Will be sensitive to increased levels of access due to trampling and damage to larval webs and the species food source.	<p>The proposed route follows the existing Isle of Wight Coast Path and public rights of way where this feature group is present.</p> <p>From Sudmoor Point to Brookgreen there are plans to move existing fence landward by approximately 20 meters, and near to Compton Chine there are plans to move the fence landward by approximately 15 meters. We also propose to move the fence west of Grange Farm landward as part of the establishment works of the England Coast Path. This will widen the space between the footpath and the cliff edge, creating habitat for Glanville Fritillary.</p> <p>We also propose to add an interpretation panel at Shepherd's Chine to inform walkers of the importance of the Glanville Fritillary habitat</p>	No significant effect on this feature.



Nature Conservation Assessment for Coastal Access Proposals around the Isle of Wight

			<p>here and asking them to keep to the marked route.</p> <p>The proposed route at Shepherd's Chine is aligned away from the chine and suitable habitat.</p>	
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Nature Conservation Assessment for Coastal Access Proposals around the Isle of Wight

Conclusion

We, Natural England, are satisfied that our proposals to improve access to the English coast around the Isle of Wight are fully compatible with our duty to further the conservation and enhancement of the notified features of Ryde Sands and Wootton Creek SSSI, Priory Woods SSSI, Brading Marshes to St Helen's Ledges SSSI, Whitecliff Bay and Bembridge Ledges SSSI, Bembridge School and Cliffs SSSI, Bembridge Down SSSI, Bonchurch Landslips SSSI, Compton Chine to Steephill Cove SSSI, Compton Down SSSI, Headon Warren and West High Down SSSI, Colwell Bay SSSI, Yar Estuary SSSI, Bouldnor and Hamstead Cliffs SSSI, Newtown Harbour SSSI, Thorness Bay SSSI and the Medina Estuary SSSI consistent with the proper exercise of our functions⁴.

In respect of the White tailed sea eagle, Red Squirrel and the Glanville Fritillary we are satisfied that in developing the new access proposals the appropriate balance has been struck between Natural England's conservation and access objectives, duties and purposes.

See also, where relevant, the conclusions of the separate HRA relating to common features.

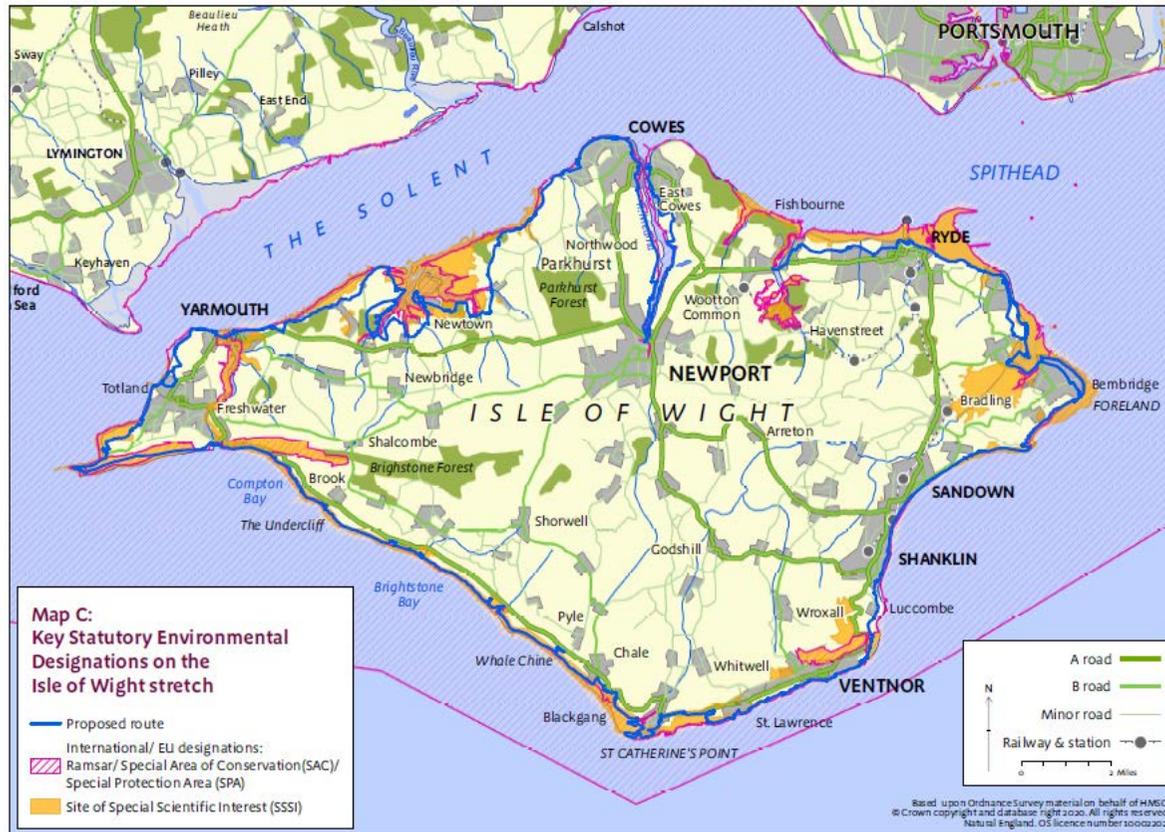
The conclusions of this assessment have been checked by:

Georgina Wright	9.03.2020	On behalf of the Coastal Access Programme Team
Graham Horton	9.03.2020	Senior Officer with responsibility for protected sites

⁴ Natural England's functions includes its balanced general purposes for access, nature conservation and landscape under the NERC Act 2006, any specific statutory duties it may have to deliver specific improvements to public access, and the access-related policies and priorities it periodically agrees with Defra.

Nature Conservation Assessment for Coastal Access Proposals around the Isle of Wight

Map A. Designated sites



Annex 1. Index to designated sites and features

Features of IOW designated sites *rMCZ features are considered features only and may change.	Newtown Harbour SSSI	Bouldnor & Hamstead Cliffs SSSI	Yar Estuary SSSI	Colwell Bay SSSI	Headon Warren & West High Down SSSI	Compton Chine - Steephill Cove SSSI	Compton Down SSSI	Bonchurch Landslips SSSI	Bembridge Down SSSI	Whitecliff Bay & Bembridge Ledges SSSI	Brading Marshes - St Helen's Ledges SSSI	Priory Woods SSSI	Ryde Sands & Wootton Creek SSSI	King's Quay Shore SSSI	Thorness Bay SSSI	Bembridge School & Cliffs SSSI	The Medina SSSI	Solent & Southampton Water RAMSAR	Solent Maritime SAC	South Wight Maritime SAC	Isle of Wight Downs SAC	Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC	Solent & Southampton Water SPA	Solent & Dorset Coast pSPA	The Needles MCZ	Yarmouth - Cowes rMCZ*	Bembridge rMCZ*
Mediterranean gull, <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> - A176, b																							x				
Aggregations of breeding birds - Black-headed gull, <i>Larus ridibundus</i>	x																										
Roseate tern, <i>Sterna dougallii</i> - A192, b																							x				
Aggregations of breeding birds - Common tern, <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	x																						x				
Aggregations of breeding birds - Little tern, <i>Sterna albifrons</i>	x																						x				

